

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for determining an offset value of a longitudinal acceleration sensor that is installable in a vehicle, the vehicle having a brake, the method comprising:
  - determining a first inclination variable representing a road surface inclination as a function of an output signal of the longitudinal acceleration sensor when the vehicle is standing still with the brake applied;
  - determining a second inclination variable representing a road surface inclination and a vehicle acceleration as a function of the output signal of the longitudinal acceleration sensor after the brake is released following the vehicle standstill; and
  - determining the offset value of the longitudinal acceleration sensor as a function of the first and second inclination variables.
2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising making a decision, as a function of the first and second inclination variables, whether the offset value is to be determined.
3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the offset value is determined if an absolute value of a difference between the first inclination variable and the second inclination variable falls below a preselected limiting value.
4. The method according to claim 2, wherein the first inclination variable is used as an offset value.
5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the second inclination variable is determined during a standing start of the vehicle, no brake-induced deceleration events and no engine-induced acceleration events having occurred since the vehicle was standing still.
6. A device for determining an offset value of a longitudinal acceleration sensor that is installable in a vehicle, the vehicle having a brake, the device comprising:
  - inclination detection means for determining a first inclination variable

representing a road surface inclination as a function of an output signal of the longitudinal acceleration sensor when the vehicle is standing still with the brake applied, and for determining a second inclination variable representing a road surface inclination and a vehicle acceleration as a function of the output signal of the longitudinal acceleration sensor after the brake is released following the vehicle standstill; and

offset value detection means for determining the offset value of the longitudinal acceleration sensor as a function of the first and second inclination variables.

7. The device according to claim 6, wherein the offset value detection means is adapted to make a decision, as a function of the first and second inclination variables, whether the offset value is to be determined.

8. The device according to claim 6, wherein the offset value is determined if an absolute value of a difference between the first inclination variable and the second inclination variable falls below a preselected limiting value.

9. The device according to claim 6, wherein the offset detection means is adapted such that the first inclination variable is used as an offset value.

10. The device according to claim 6, wherein the second inclination variable is determined during a standing start of the vehicle, no brake-induced deceleration events and no engine-induced acceleration events having occurred since the vehicle was standing still.